

March 2, 1964

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT EVALUATION

F-5-R-13 Central Montana Fisheries Study--Steve E. Swedberg

Job I. Inventory of Waters of the Project Area

Information is needed on the more important fishing waters in the project area. Also, there are various problems within the year that involve waters of lesser importance. The following is a review of problems encountered in this project during 1963-64.

The most important project is a study of the sauger and goldeye in the Missouri River. This project is carried on in cooperation with the fisheries personnel of District 6. Dams have been proposed on the Missouri River between Morony Dam and Fort Peck Reservoir. Information is lacking concerning the ecology of the fish inhabiting these waters. If the dams are built information could be used concerning fish populations in advance of construction. Fish barriers may be necessary on the Judith and Marias Rivers to block the migration of goldeye, carp and suckers.

A student is working on age and movement of goldeye in several tributaries to the Missouri River, but mainly in the Marias and Teton Rivers. Goldeye and sauger were tagged. Expected returns should be best from tagged fish in the Teton and Marias Rivers, primarily because these two rivers can be trapped with success.

Fishermen use in most areas is light, therefore, department personnel will trap and angle as many fish as possible.

Goldeye and sauger tagging will be continued in 1964.

Access to Bean Lake was acquired recently and fish population data has been obtained with gill nets. The findings show chemical treatment would be more damaging than beneficial. Large numbers of fish food organisms were observed in the water, and gill net sets revealed only mature suckers, between the ages of 4 and 9 years of age.

Additional projects consisted of electrofishing Sheep Creek, Tenderfoot Creek and the Middle Fork of the Dearborn River. The three streams contain large numbers of trout and few suckers. These streams exhibit some of the best populations of trout in the District, and we will keep up with the trout populations in 1964.

This is a continuing project.